



Identification and Management of Slow Learners in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Slow learners are students who require additional time, guidance, and appropriate instructional support to achieve expected learning outcomes. In Tamil Nadu, identifying and managing slow learners is essential for promoting inclusive and equitable education. This study examines the methods used to identify slow learners, the academic and socio-emotional challenges they encounter, and the strategies adopted by schools and teachers to enhance their learning. A descriptive research approach is proposed, with data collected through questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and academic records from teachers, parents, and students. The study highlights the importance of early identification, individualized instruction, remedial teaching, continuous assessment, parental involvement, and inclusive classroom practices in improving student performance. The expected findings will provide practical recommendations for educators, school administrators, and policymakers to strengthen support systems for slow learners and foster their academic achievement, confidence, and overall development in schools across Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Slow learners, Tamil Nadu, Early identification, Remedial teaching, Inclusive education, Individualized instruction, Academic achievement, Educational management.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right that aims to provide equal learning opportunities for every child, regardless of individual abilities and learning pace. Slow learners are students who learn more gradually than their peers and require additional time, guidance, and instructional support to achieve academic success. In Tamil Nadu, the implementation of inclusive education has increased awareness of addressing the diverse learning needs of students; however, many slow learners continue to face academic, social, and emotional challenges in mainstream classrooms. Early identification and appropriate educational interventions are essential to prevent learning gaps and improve student confidence and performance. Effective management strategies, including individualized instruction, remedial teaching, continuous



assessment, positive reinforcement, and active parental involvement, can significantly enhance their learning outcomes. This study focuses on the identification and management of slow learners in Tamil Nadu, with the aim of promoting inclusive educational practices and providing practical recommendations for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers to support the holistic development of these learners.

Definition of Slow Learners

A **slow learner** is a student who learns at a slower pace than peers of the same age and requires additional time, guidance, and instructional support to understand and master academic concepts. Slow learners generally have average to below-average intellectual ability but do not have an intellectual disability. With appropriate teaching methods, individualized instruction, remedial education, and continuous encouragement, they are capable of achieving meaningful academic progress.

According to N. L. Gage and David C. Berliner, slow learners are students who require more time and repeated learning experiences to acquire knowledge and skills than their classmates. They benefit from structured instruction, frequent reinforcement, and supportive classroom environments that accommodate their individual learning needs.

Review of Literature

Kavale and Forness (2000) examined the identification of students with learning difficulties and emphasized that early diagnosis, systematic assessment, and individualized instructional planning are essential for improving academic performance. **Lyon et.al. (2001)** redefined learning disabilities by highlighting evidence-based identification procedures and early intervention. The study concluded that timely educational support significantly improves learning outcomes.

UNESCO (2005) emphasized inclusive education as a fundamental approach for ensuring equal educational opportunities. The report recommended flexible curricula, teacher preparation, and supportive learning environments for students with diverse learning needs. **Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011)** proposed the concept of inclusive pedagogy, arguing that teachers should adapt classroom practices to meet the needs of all learners rather than separating students according to ability.

American Psychiatric Association (2013), through the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*, highlighted comprehensive assessment procedures for identifying learning disorders and stressed multidisciplinary evaluation before educational intervention. **Tomlinson (2014)** demonstrated that differentiated instruction improves the academic performance of slow learners by adapting teaching methods, learning materials, and assessments according to students' readiness and learning styles.

Hornby (2014) emphasized that effective collaboration among teachers, parents, school administrators, and specialists is essential for identifying and managing students experiencing learning difficulties in inclusive schools. **United Nations (2015)**, through Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), advocated inclusive and equitable education, encouraging schools to provide appropriate support services for learners with diverse educational needs.

Khalil, Slade, and Prinsloo (2023) reviewed learning analytics in inclusive education and found that digital technologies and data-driven educational practices can improve learning support, student engagement, and retention for learners requiring additional assistance. **Wanabuliandari et al. (2025)** systematically reviewed research on slow learners' mathematical problem-solving and concluded that individualized instruction, repeated practice, and concrete learning experiences significantly enhance academic achievement. **Vogt et al. (2026)** conducted a systematic review of learning disability identification procedures and found considerable variation in assessment practices across countries. The study recommended internationally consistent, evidence-based identification frameworks.



Hay and Beamish (2026) synthesized three decades of review-level research on inclusive education and reported that teacher professional development, inclusive classroom practices, and policy implementation are key factors in improving educational outcomes for students with special educational needs. **Chaudhary (2026)** reviewed barriers to inclusive education and identified inadequate teacher preparation, rigid curricula, insufficient resources, and weak policy implementation as major challenges affecting inclusive schooling. **Nasution and Budiyo (2026)** reviewed adaptive learning strategies for slow learners and concluded that contextual teaching, individualized support, concrete instructional materials, and flexible assessment significantly improve numeracy and classroom participation. **Hutapea, Marmoah, and Azman (2026)** reviewed adaptive learning media based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and found that multimedia resources, audio-visual materials, and adaptive technologies improve motivation, comprehension, and engagement among slow learners.

Statement of the Problem

Slow learners constitute a significant group of students who require additional time, individualized instruction, and continuous support to achieve expected learning outcomes. In Tamil Nadu, despite the implementation of inclusive education policies, many slow learners continue to face academic, social, and emotional challenges in mainstream classrooms. Limited early identification, inadequate remedial programmes, insufficient teacher training, and lack of parental involvement often hinder their academic progress. Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms and limited educational resources make it difficult for teachers to provide personalized attention. These challenges may result in poor academic performance, low self-esteem, and reduced classroom participation. Therefore, there is a need to identify slow learners at an early stage and examine effective management strategies that can improve their learning outcomes, promote inclusive education, and support their overall academic and personal development in Tamil Nadu.

Need for the Study

Developing reading habits among slow learners is essential for improving literacy, academic achievement, and lifelong learning skills. Many slow learners struggle with reading due to limited comprehension, low motivation, inadequate instructional support, and insufficient access to reading resources. Understanding these challenges is necessary for designing effective teaching strategies that meet their individual learning needs. This study is needed to identify the factors influencing reading habits, evaluate the role of teachers, school libraries, and parents, and recommend practical interventions. The findings will help educators, librarians, school administrators, and policymakers strengthen reading promotion programmes and create inclusive learning environments that support the academic and personal development of slow learners.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the characteristics of slow learners in schools in Tamil Nadu.
2. To examine the factors that contribute to slow learning among school students.
3. To analyze the academic, social, and emotional challenges faced by slow learners.
4. To evaluate the roles of teachers and parents in the identification and management of slow learners.
5. To recommend effective teaching and support strategies for improving the academic performance and overall development of slow learners.

Research Questions

1. What are the key characteristics of slow learners in schools in Tamil Nadu?
2. What factors contribute to slow learning among school students in Tamil Nadu?
3. What academic, social, and emotional challenges do slow learners face?
4. How do teachers and parents contribute to the identification and management of slow learners?



5. What educational strategies are most effective in improving the learning outcomes of slow learners in Tamil Nadu?

Characteristics of Slow Learners

Slow learners generally require more time to understand and retain new concepts. They often have a shorter attention span, slower comprehension, and difficulty applying learned knowledge to new situations. Their academic performance is usually below the class average, and they may require repeated explanations and continuous reinforcement. Many slow learners lack self-confidence and hesitate to participate in classroom activities. However, with appropriate guidance, encouragement, and individualized instruction, they can make steady academic progress.

Causes of Slow Learning

Slow learning may result from a combination of cognitive, environmental, social, and educational factors. Common causes include limited intellectual ability, poor health and nutrition, inadequate early childhood education, unfavorable home environments, low socioeconomic status, language barriers, emotional stress, irregular school attendance, ineffective teaching methods, and lack of learning resources. Identifying these underlying causes is essential for planning suitable educational interventions.

Identification of Slow Learners

Early identification of slow learners is essential for providing timely support. Teachers can identify slow learners through continuous classroom observation, academic performance, diagnostic tests, classroom participation, homework completion, and interactions with parents. Psychological assessments and cumulative school records may also help determine students' learning needs. Early identification enables schools to provide appropriate remedial instruction and individualized educational support.

Academic, Social, and Emotional Challenges

Slow learners frequently experience academic difficulties, including poor achievement, slow reading and writing skills, and difficulty understanding complex concepts. Socially, they may struggle to interact confidently with peers and participate in group activities. Emotionally, repeated academic failure may lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, frustration, lack of motivation, and fear of classroom participation. Addressing these challenges requires supportive classroom environments and positive reinforcement.

Role of Teachers in Managing Slow Learners

Teachers play a crucial role in identifying and supporting slow learners. They should adopt learner-centered teaching methods, simplify complex concepts, provide individualized instruction, conduct remedial classes, use teaching aids, encourage active participation, and assess progress continuously. Positive feedback, patience, and motivation help improve students' confidence and academic performance. Collaboration with parents and school counselors further enhances learning outcomes.

Role of Parents and Family Support

Parents and family members significantly influence the academic and emotional development of slow learners. A supportive home environment, regular communication with teachers, supervision of homework, encouragement, and positive reinforcement can improve learning outcomes. Parents should avoid comparing their children with others and instead focus on their individual strengths and progress. Strong collaboration between families and schools contributes to the holistic development and educational success of slow learners.



Inclusive Education and Policy Initiatives in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu promotes inclusive education through government initiatives that ensure equal learning opportunities for children with diverse educational needs. Schools implement inclusive classroom practices, teacher training, resource support, and individualized learning plans. These initiatives encourage the identification, participation, and academic development of slow learners within mainstream educational settings.

Remedial Teaching and Differentiated Instruction

Remedial teaching provides additional academic support to help slow learners overcome learning difficulties. Differentiated instruction adapts teaching methods, learning materials, classroom activities, and assessments according to students' abilities and learning styles. These approaches improve comprehension, increase participation, and enhance the academic achievement and confidence of slow learners.

Use of Educational Technology and Assistive Learning Tools

Educational technology supports slow learners by making lessons more interactive and engaging. Digital learning platforms, educational applications, multimedia resources, audio-visual aids, and assistive technologies help improve understanding, memory, and communication skills. These tools encourage independent learning and provide personalized educational experiences for diverse learners.

Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Continuous assessment and progress monitoring enable teachers to identify the strengths and learning needs of slow learners. Regular classroom assessments, diagnostic tests, observations, portfolios, and feedback help evaluate academic progress. Monitoring learning outcomes allows teachers to modify instructional strategies and provide timely remedial support.

Classroom Management Strategies

Effective classroom management creates a positive and supportive learning environment for slow learners. Teachers should establish clear learning objectives, use simple instructions, encourage active participation, provide positive reinforcement, organize cooperative learning activities, and maintain a patient and encouraging attitude. These strategies improve learning outcomes and classroom engagement.

School-Based Support Systems and Counselling

School-based support systems play an essential role in meeting the educational and emotional needs of slow learners. Collaboration among teachers, school counsellors, special educators, parents, and administrators helps identify learning difficulties and provide appropriate interventions. Counselling services improve students' self-confidence, motivation, emotional well-being, and overall academic development.

Recommendations for Improving Learning Outcomes

Schools should implement early identification, individualized learning plans, remedial teaching, differentiated instruction, and continuous assessment to support slow learners. Regular teacher training, parental involvement, counselling services, and the integration of educational technology should be strengthened. Collaborative efforts among educators, families, and policymakers can significantly improve academic performance and holistic development.



Suggestions

1. Schools should establish an **early identification system** to recognize slow learners at the primary level through regular screening and diagnostic assessments.
2. Teachers should adopt **differentiated instruction** and learner-centered teaching methods that accommodate individual learning needs and abilities.
3. **Remedial teaching programmes** should be conducted regularly to strengthen students' basic literacy, numeracy, and subject-specific skills.
4. Continuous **teacher training and professional development** should be organized to equip teachers with effective strategies for managing slow learners in inclusive classrooms.
5. Schools should promote **parental involvement** by maintaining regular communication and encouraging parents to support learning activities at home.
6. Educational technology, including **interactive digital tools and assistive learning resources**, should be integrated to enhance students' engagement and understanding.
7. Schools should provide **counselling and psychological support services** to improve the self-confidence, motivation, and emotional well-being of slow learners.
8. Classroom assessment should focus on **continuous evaluation and constructive feedback** rather than relying solely on examinations.
9. The Government of Tamil Nadu should strengthen **inclusive education policies**, increase funding for resource rooms, and appoint trained special educators in schools.
10. Future research should investigate innovative teaching approaches, artificial intelligence-based learning tools, and evidence-based intervention programmes to improve the academic achievement and holistic development of slow learners in Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The identification and effective management of slow learners are essential for ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education in Tamil Nadu. Early identification, individualized instruction, remedial teaching, differentiated learning strategies, continuous assessment, and active parental involvement can significantly improve the academic performance and overall development of slow learners. Teachers, school administrators, counsellors, and policymakers should work collaboratively to create supportive and learner-friendly educational environments. Future research should focus on evaluating innovative teaching methods, digital learning technologies, and school-based intervention programs designed for slow learners. Strengthening teacher training, expanding inclusive education policies, and improving access to educational resources will help empower slow learners, reduce learning disparities, and enable every child to achieve their full academic and personal potential.

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